

Gifts exchange between Omani rulers and officials and some western countries in the light of documents: an archival documentary study of an Omani historical document from the twentieth century

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Summary

The researcher pushed to highlight the topic of gifts exchanged between Omani officials, British and French officials, what he found from the spread of this phenomenon among the various sects of Omanis, especially the politicians among them, and it is painful that these gifts are among the things that are invaluable as antiquities. At the beginning of the matter an individual might think that the motives behind that courtship are love and generosity, but it was soon realized that the matter has another dimension, which is interest, which aroused curiosity to search for this phenomenon and its seriousness in light of the Omani documents related to that issue. This is to answer several questions, including: What is the motive behind these gifts? Is it only friendliness, endearment and harmony, or is the matter to facilitate interests and overcome difficulties as a kind of disguised political bribe? And what are the types of gifts that the two foreign countries give? What are the types of gifts for Omanis, and what does the different type of gifts symbolize? Was there any diplomatic tradition to prevent the exchange of gifts for fear of consuls being involved in unworthy and impermissible engagements and agreements, or what? Is this matter found in England only, or in France and the United States of America as well? Is this, with regard to Oman, known and not reprehensible, or what? This was done by studying the Omani documents - available to the researcher - in the period (May 1807 AD - June 1837 AD) and (February 3, 1958 AD), with the investigation and publication of one of these documents.

Islamic law permits the exchange of gifts with non-Muslims if it does not lead to their loyalty (), so the gift is included in the general righteousness and charity, and for this Imam Al-Bukhari in his Sahih indicated that a gift is permissible for a non-Muslim, and the prophet had accepted gifts from some non-Muslims, like his acceptance of the Judaism that gifted the poisoned sheep to him, and al-Tabarani extracted from the hadith of Umm Hakim al-Khuzaiya, she said: I said, O Messenger of God, "You hate the return of kindness? From his brother is known without supervision and no issue; let him accept it and not return it, for it is the provision of God that God gave it to him, Bukhari and others brought out the hadith of Aisha, who said: The Prophet accepted and rewarded the gift, and it is permissible to exchange gifts between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, because the Prophet used their gifts, and he was used to give them gifts as well.

The research relied on the analytical historical method, by reviewing primary sources and secondary references and critiquing them internally and externally, with critical analytical note to those sources, and formulating hypotheses, in addition to personal interviews of Omani and

Zanzibari personalities, in addition to the diplomatic documentary study to reach the legal formulas used in the documents and their parts through the archival diplomatic study of them.

Through the documents on which the research relied on, it became clear that there was an exchange of gifts between the Omani state on the one hand and England, France and the United States of America on the other hand, and this matter was not limited to gifts between the sultans of Oman and the kings and presidents of those countries, but rather gifts were found between the sultans of Oman and these consuls. Countries, as well as the consuls exchanging gifts with some of the sheikhs of Oman, as evidenced by the document sent by the British Consul to Sheikh Nasser Al-Maskari, and it is also possible to conclude that the motive behind those gifts is facilitating interests and overcoming difficulties as a kind of political bribery wrapped in a cover of friendliness and endearment. In the documents, there are the types of gifts that foreign countries sent to the Omani state, which consisted of: tools of combat and war, including weapons, ammunition and soldiers to rein in the rebels; This quality is what the Arab rulers were happy with at that time, and there were no gifts to build a civilization, such as vehicles, fishing tools, drilling machines, and the likes of them. Which confirms the orientation of these countries, and that sending their gifts for purposes that benefit their aspirations and not personal tools, as for the types of gifts for Omanis were: animals, food, clothing, drinks, antique swords and the like that are available in their environment, and they used to choose every precious, expensive and strange thing to send it to the officials of those countries in a personal capacity of them and their wives, and finally it can be asserted that this issue of gifts is rooted in the Omani character to gain benefits from it, and that the matter is known and not at all deplored, and it also became clear that there were no diplomatic traditions at one time in England and France that prevented the exchange of gifts with rulers of Oman, especially France, but the tradition of preventing the exchange of these gifts in a personal capacity appeared with the English government, represented by its consul in Oman, and this respected tradition was also found by the government of the United States of America. This is for fear of the involvement of government employees, including presidents, consuls, and others, in unworthy and impermissible engagements and agreements.

And it became clear from studying documents and other sources that when the Sultans of Oman sent gifts or recorded gifts that reached them, they would mention them in the margins of the letters timidly, or that they devoted a special paper to it attached to the original letter, and it is mentioned in detail in number, type and quantity, even numbers are mentioned letters and numbers so as not to be any confusion or suspicion of change, and gifts are often sent with people who are favored by the sultans, and if the sultans receive gifts they follow them with a message of gratitude and thanks for what they have received, and they begin the message with the phrase (in the name of God Almighty) and then pray to the sender, then enumerate the gifts in detail, then add that in terms such as: (He did not need all this fracturing), then the supplication is mentioned for him again.

In the case of the gifts that come to the Sultan, he orders them to be recorded, so the writing begins by saying: (Knowing the originator from ... and mentioning the sender's name, surname, and his position, then praying for him), then he mentions the person who was sent to

him and says: (To our master) and he mentions the sultan's name, surname and job, and begins by mentioning the gifts and says: The first of that) and then enumerate each type, its number and quantity in a single line or a detailed narration, respectively.

And in the case of gifts sent by the Sultan, he writes: (The one who reaches the impurity ...) and enumerates the attributes, titles and position of the recipient, then he mentions the gifts in precise and unambiguous detail, then ends the message or mentions before listing the items of gifts, saying: (This is for the sake of love and friendship) and he may describe these gifts as (something despicable and not mentioned in the side of his elevation), then add that by mentioning: (It is hoped that this will be accepted) or more and say: (with an excuse and forgiveness) then mention the name of the sender, his titles and his function, then the name of the messenger whom the gifts were sent with, then the date of Hijri day, month and year.

These documents confirm the extent of reverence, respect and reverence for the consuls of those countries from among the sultans of the Omani state, which proves the extent of the sway and power of these countries over the capabilities of things in Oman, which gave their employees strength and immunity.

The work of publishing and a detailed archival study of the document of the British Consul to Sheikh Ibarra, and then coming up with some of the diplomatic rules that were followed in writing such documents in the Sultanate of Oman.

Then the researcher recommends:

The inevitability of establishing a strict law that prevents Arab officials from exchanging gifts with foreign officials in a personal capacity for fear of being involved in engaging in unworthy and impermissible engagements and agreements, and the likes of them.

The necessity to quickly collect Omani documents in their original collections, and not to separate them and classify them objectively, as is the case now, but rather arrange them according to the principle of the recognized unity of origin, which will necessarily lead to bridging the existing spaces in order to know names and places.

The necessity of forming scientific committees specialized in documents to collect and record those rules present in the stomachs of these documents spread throughout Oman, and to compare between them, as they differ from one region to another, while preserving their geographical character and the region established in them to determine their locations accurately, otherwise a major milestone will be lost in those documents.

The necessity of the correct scientific restoration of those documents.

Collecting the conventions, places and names filled with those documents, defining them and explaining them so that they are not lost and disappear along with the past.

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